Manitoba Family Services and Housing

RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

to the

Office of the Children's Advocate

SHELTER SYSTEM REVIEW REPORT

"Review into the Operation of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services Emergency Assessment Placement Department Shelter System"

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SHELTER SYSTEM REVIEW REPORT

1. OVERVIEW

The child and family services system in Manitoba is undergoing a historic restructuring. Through the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry-Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI), Aboriginal children and families in Manitoba will receive culturally appropriate services in a new system governed and operated by Aboriginal persons, in partnership with government. The Children's Advocate report notes: "it has been demonstrated through numerous studies that the child and family services system has not well served Aboriginal children, youth and their families. This is a fundamental reason for the AJI-CWI."

The recently proclaimed *Child and Family Services Authorities Act* is a cornerstone of this initiative. This legislation, proclaimed in November 2003, established four new child and family services authorities. Three are Aboriginal Child and Family Services Authorities and the fourth is the General Authority (for all other families). Each is responsible for serving families from their communities regardless of where they live in Manitoba. As part of these structural changes, resources are being transferred from the existing service delivery system to the control of the newly created authorities.

Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch currently provides a full range of child and family services in Winnipeg. When the Advocate's review was launched, Winnipeg Child and Family Services was under the jurisdiction of a board of directors, the majority appointed by government. Since April 1, 2003, Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch has been operated directly by government as a branch of Manitoba Family Services and Housing.

Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch provides out-of-home placements for at-risk children who require short-term care, on an emergency basis. These placements are referred to as the Short-Term Emergency Placement (S.T.E.P.) System. Shelters are one type of placement resource used for this kind of short-term, emergency care. Shelters are group-care residences that are staffed in shifts, that range in size from two to six beds. Every effort is made to provide a home-like environment in the shelter system. Children stay in the shelters while professional social work staff develop plans to return them home or arrange for a more permanent placement.

Planning continues to transfer much of the child and family services system in Winnipeg to the control of the Aboriginal authorities. This is following a similar devolution process occurring in other regions of the Province and will include transferring responsibility for delivering emergency, short-term placement resources for children in temporary care.

2. BACKGROUND

In December 2002, the then Minister of Family Services and Housing requested that the Office of the Children's Advocate conduct an operational review of the emergency shelter system within Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The review arose mainly due to concerns about the quality of care being provided in those emergency shelters. As noted in the Advocate's report, Prairie Research Associates identified concerns about the short-term placement system as early as 1997 when the shelter system was developing. A rapid growth in the number of shelter facilities from 1998 to 2000, due primarily to a shortage of emergency foster homes, also raised some quality of care concerns.

Since 2001, Winnipeg Child and Family Services has developed alternate placement resources to relieve some of the pressure being exerted on the shelter system. This was part of a coordinated strategy to ensure the shelter system was able to effectively fulfil its mandate of providing temporary, not long-term, care for children.

A three-person team from the Office of the Children's Advocate completed the operational review. The team conducted extensive research including a comprehensive analysis of statistical data on admissions over a five-year period, a literature review, visits to over 40 different shelter facilities and interviews with staff of the shelter system, management, union representatives and stakeholders. Most importantly, the research team also interviewed children who are, or have been, placed in the shelter system. The comments and experiences of these children provide the most valuable insights into the quality of care being provided. This extensive research, utilizing both statistical and experiential information, provides a thorough assessment of the shelter system. The final report was provided to the Minister of Family Services and Housing in April 2004.

After receiving the final report, Manitoba Family Services and Housing immediately developed an action plan to respond to the Advocate's recommendations. The purpose of this paper is to describe the action plan.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF THE SHELTER SYSTEM REVIEW REPORT

The Advocate has produced a final report that is quite comprehensive and has an extensive discussion of the key issues and challenges facing the emergency care system. The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the report's main themes and connect key findings with Manitoba Family Services and Housing's action plan. This is not intended to be an exhaustive overview of the Advocate's findings or recommendations. The far-reaching nature of the Advocate's assessment and recommendations can only be fully understood by reading the entire report.

(a) Theme – Quality of Care

The primary reason for the review was concern about quality of care in the shelter system. Overall, the report indicates that the basic care needs of children are being met.

The Advocate writes "children and youth reported that routines were established in the shelters, they received adequate nourishment and were involved in daily activities." Many children interviewed report having a positive relationship with their social worker.

The physical environment of most shelters is judged to be adequate although the Advocate does express concern about facilities located in unsafe neighbourhoods. The staff of the shelter system are seen to be qualified and committed to their jobs but may not have adequate training to meet the complex needs of some children in care.

The report does raise concerns about the extent to which the shelters are able to offer programming, recreational opportunities and ensure children are attending school. The report suggests that the staffing model may not be the most desirable given the potential impacts on quality of care. Further, based largely on a thorough assessment of the care provided in Winnipeg's shelters and approaches used in other jurisdictions, the Advocate concludes that children under the age of eight should not be cared for in shift-staffed group facilities.

(b) Theme – Supervision and Support Within the Shelter System

The report expresses concern about the supervision and support being provided for staff working in the shelter system. The Advocate suggests that staff need to have greater access to supervision that is done consistently and regularly. Of particular concern is the unavailability of direct supervision on the evening and night shifts for these 24-hour care facilities. The report recommends those responsible for supervising line staff (the shelter coordinators) receive training to better fulfil their human resources responsibilities. Related to this, the report contains a number of recommendations to ensure that policies and procedures are kept current, reflect the existing service needs and result in care that is delivered consistently throughout the shelter system. On the service environment, the Advocate finds that shelter staff feel isolated from the broader organization within which they work and there is a high level of tension in the labour-management relationship.

(c) Theme – System Oversight

The Child Protection Branch of Manitoba Family Services and Housing is currently responsible for developing standards and licensing residential care facilities for children (including shift staffed emergency care shelters). While there are detailed requirements that apply to all group care resources for children, the Advocate recommends that licensing and program standards be established specifically for emergency care placements. Emergency care should have its own set of standards to reflect its unique role in the continuum of substitute care for children. The report also suggests an additional staff person is needed so Child Protection Branch can adequately fulfil its licensing and monitoring functions, in the children's residential care system.

Another key element of system oversight in the shelter system is the role of the Provincial Abuse Investigator. Currently, the Provincial Abuse Investigator conducts a review when there is an allegation of abuse made against a staff person employed by the Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch. The Advocate commends the work of the Investigator but suggests the role and mandate need to be expanded. Further, the report

suggests that the Child Protection Branch needs an additional staff person to adequately perform the duties associated with an expanded mandate.

The Advocate's report is also critical of the process used to establish an annual budget for the shelter system in Winnipeg. The report expresses concern that the budgeting formula may create inequities between individual shelters and recommends that Manitoba Family Services and Housing review this budgeting and allocation process.

(d) Theme – Future Planning and Development

The Advocate provides clear direction for the future development of emergency placement resources for children. The report concludes the shelter system has developed incrementally, in response to immediate placement needs and in the absence of a coherent vision or comprehensive program model. A shortage of foster placements in Manitoba, a trend common throughout the country, was a key factor driving the expansion of the shelter system.

The report calls for a more coordinated and evidence-based approach to resource development. Improved data collection is required to determine the planning of placement resources that are responsive to the needs of children who require an emergency placement. The Advocate recommends a centralized capacity be established for developing placement resources throughout the province. This requires the Provincial Placement Desk be reconfigured, better coordination between Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch and key service providers, and more cooperation between government departments.

(e) Theme – Leadership Role For the Four Child and Family Services Authorities

The Advocate consistently recommends the newly created child and family services Authorities play a leadership role in designing and implementing changes needed to achieve long-term improvements in the emergency care system. The analysis of admission data over a five-year period shows that Aboriginal children are over-represented in the shelter system, especially younger children (over the five years, 80 per cent of children aged four and under, placed into emergency care, were of Aboriginal ancestry). This analysis and support for the role of the Authorities reinforces the importance of the structural changes being implemented as part of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry-Child Welfare Initiative.

4. MANITOBA FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING: RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

The Advocate's report contains over 70 individual recommendations. The report acknowledges that, given the historical development of the shelter system and the lack of alternate resources, there are "no quick fix solutions" to many of the complex challenges facing the shelter system.

The report's recommendations must be considered in the broader context of the AJI-CWI restructuring process. The actions taken by Manitoba Family Services and Housing must be done in a manner consistent with the AJI-CWI devolution and that respects the philosophy and partnership principles that support this important initiative. The Advocate reinforces the importance of this when she writes:

> "The shelter system affects the aboriginal community more than any other. In developing any new emergency care system we must be aware of the population it will primarily serve. Currently this system serves primarily Aboriginal children and youth and their families living in the City of Winnipeg. In planning any new system we must be cognizant of this very fact."

The findings and recommendations provide a blueprint for developing an emergency care system that has a clear direction and purpose within the broader context of all services intended to enhance the well-being of children. Along with a future-oriented blueprint, the report contains many practical recommendations that could have a more immediate impact on the quality of care being provided in the shelter system.

In response to the Advocate's report, Manitoba Family Services and Housing has developed a comprehensive action plan with four fundamental components:

1. **Act immediately to create new emergency foster care resources specifically designed for children under age eight.**

2. **Immediately establish an Implementation Committee to address the Advocate's recommendations for future planning, system design and longer-term resource development.**

3. **Implement recommendations that will immediately have a positive impact on improving the quality of care in the shelter system.**

4. **Implement recommendations that will immediately strengthen the system oversight capacity.**

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Child and Family Services and the Assistant Deputy Minister of Community Service Delivery will share overall responsibility for ensuring the four action plan strategies are implemented as intended and results achieved within expected timelines.

Action Plan Strategy 1
Develop New Emergency Care Resources

The growth of the shelter system occurred, in part, due to a shortage of alternative placements. This placed a strain on the emergency care system and resulted in some children spending longer periods of time in shift-staffed care than is desirable. Such a

resource shortage is not unique to Manitoba but is characteristic in child welfare systems throughout North America. Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch recognized this issue and, in 2002/03, developed over 75 new, alternative placements to relieve pressure on the shelter system. The Advocate describes this as "admirable" and recommends the development of new resources continue but focus on recruiting foster care placements for younger children. The Advocate recommends, unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise, that no child under the age of eight should be placed in a shift-staffed group environment. This is a foundational recommendation that will significantly alter the population served and ongoing role of the shelter system. In response, Manitoba Family Services and Housing will initiate the following action:

- **Begin immediately to create 50 new emergency care foster beds specifically for children under the age of eight.**

The four child and family services Authorities will, collectively, be responsible for establishing criteria and then selecting service providers to recruit foster parents for the 50 new beds. It's expected the new resources will be developed incrementally, with all 50 in place by the end of 2004/05, and it is anticipated this will eliminate the need for young children to be placed in the shelter system.

Action Plan Strategy 2
Build a New Emergency Care System for Children

The Advocate's report contains numerous recommendations about how planning should occur for the future development of the shelter system. These are placed in the context of broader recommendations to re-configure the way residential care resources are organized. Collectively, these recommendations represent a blueprint for building a new system of emergency care for children that must be implemented in a systematic and organized manner, using an evidence-based approach to planning. To achieve this, Manitoba Family Services and Housing will:

- **Immediately establish an Implementation Committee to act on the future planning and long-term recommendations in the Advocate's report.**

The Implementation Committee will be co-chaired by Joy Cramer, Executive Director, Child Protection Branch, Manitoba Family Services and Housing; and Dr. Denis Bracken, Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba. Dr. Bracken has extensive experience in managing complex planning processes and, in the role of co-chair, will provide an expert perspective that is independent from government and the child welfare system.

Consistent with the leadership role strongly supported by the Advocate, the Chief Executive Officers of each child and family services Authority have agreed to sit on this committee. A representative from Manitoba Family Services and Housing will complete the membership.

Terms of reference for the committee have been developed in consultation with the four Authorities (copy attached). The Implementation Committee will act on the major planning, governance and resource development recommendations in the Advocate's report. Taking an evidence-based planning approach, the committee will:

Step 1 - Complete a province-wide assessment of residential care needs for children.

Step 2 - Based on the results of the needs assessment, develop a proposed continuum of care and classification system for children's residential care.

Step 3 - Within the context of the proposed continuum of care, develop a vision statement and comprehensive program model for the role of emergency placement facilities and services.

Step 4 - Given the proposed program model, recommend standards and training strategy to ensure staff have the qualifications and competence to adequately meet the needs of children in emergency care.

Step 5 - Assess the feasibility of implementing the Advocate's recommendations regarding a centralized office to oversee future resource developments, reconfigure the provincial placement desk, external governance of placement resources for children and a strategy for foster parent recruitment.

Manitoba Family Services and Housing will assign a full-time coordinator to assist the Implementation Committee in completing its work and, as recommended by the Advocate, one or more persons with extensive experience and expertise in children's residential care will be made available in an advisory capacity. The Implementation Committee will table a progress report within three months and submit a detailed plan within one year.

Action Plan Strategy 3
Immediately Improve the Quality of Care in the Shelter System

While new resources are being developed and planning is underway for longer-term structural changes in the system, Manitoba Family Services and Housing will implement recommendations that will have an immediate and positive impact on improving the quality of care for children placed in emergency, short-term care. One of the key recommendations pertains to the staffing model used in the shelter system. The Advocate expresses concern that the practice of using 24-hour shifts is having a negative impact on staff's ability to deliver high quality care. Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch has reduced the use of 24-hour shifts whenever possible and findings in the Advocate's

report suggest this trend should continue. In response, Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch will:

- **Not use 24-hour shifts in any new shelter that is opened and continue to reduce and eventually eliminate 24-hour shifts in the existing shelter system.**

Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch is also responsible for acting on the Advocate's recommendations to improve supervision within the shelter system. In the existing organizational structure of Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch, direct supervision of shelter staff is the responsibility of the "shelter coordinators." There are 11 coordinators and each one is responsible for a number of shelters. Recently, Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch developed a "coordinator's protocol" that clearly outlines performance expectations in the areas of regular, on-site supervision, fiscal accountability and monitoring quality of care. A person with extensive experience in residential care was seconded to Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch to mentor and coach the coordinators in using the new protocol. The Advocate commends these efforts and recommends this staff person continue to provide support to the coordinators. Manitoba Family Services and Housing agrees and will ensure this support function continues given the positive impact on supervision that has occurred.

Some of the Advocate's recommendations suggest further improvements can be achieved and staff may feel less isolated if the coordinator's protocol is expanded in certain areas. In response, Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch will immediately amend the coordinator's protocol to:

- Increase the availability of supervision across all shifts in the shelter system;
- Ensure shelter staff have regular access to updates and other information routinely available to other staff in the Branch; and
- Ensure staff in the shelters inform children of their rights and provide children with information about the Office of the Children's Advocate and the Manitoba Youth in Care Network.

As noted in the Advocate's report, staff training is a key element of a quality care system for children. Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch will ensure shelter coordinators attend the youth care competency based training program and offer additional training in performance management. Management will immediately review the training experiences of shelter staff and take measures to ensure the Branch complies with established standards and internal policies. Also, as recommended by the Advocate, Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch will review, update and then communicate the provisions of the shelter policies and procedures manual and work with Internal Audit to prepare revised budget and funding allocations for the shelter system. Work in these areas will also begin immediately.

Action Plan Strategy 4
Strengthen System Oversight

A number of recommendations in the report suggest improvements need to be made to the way quality of care is monitored. A key recommendation is that specific program standards need to be developed for emergency care placements rather than applying the broader residential care standards, that may not completely address the unique environment in the shelter system. Further, the Advocate suggests that Child Protection Branch is not equipped with sufficient resources to adequately fulfil the licensing and investigative responsibilities. Manitoba Family Services and Housing agrees with these recommendations and, immediately, will:

- Begin developing program standards specific to emergency placement facilities.
- Expand the mandate of the Provincial Abuse Investigator as proposed in the Advocate's report and develop a program standard to ensure the Investigator's reports are tracked and the recommendations followed.
- Add one more staff position to the Provincial Abuse Investigation Unit.
- Add one more staff position to the Licensing Unit.
- Expand the membership of the Provincial Placement desk so the composition is more multi-disciplinary in nature.

The Advocate's report also suggests Manitoba Family Services and Housing needs to work more closely with service providers and other government departments to ensure existing resources are being used effectively and that new placement resources are created to serve children with special needs. Manitoba Family Services and Housing also agrees with these recommendations and, in response, representatives from the Child Protection Branch will take the following actions:

- Initiate discussions with the Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System and Winnipeg Police Services to ensure resources are being used appropriately within the shelter system.
- Initiate discussions with service providers and other departments to consider how specialized resources can be developed to provide emergency care for siblings, children with disabilities and children leaving the Justice system.
- Meet with the Manitoba Foster Family Network to explore ways of supporting research into foster care breakdown, which appears to be a factor contributing to shelter usage.

Labour-Management Relations

The child and family services system in Manitoba is undergoing a restructuring of unprecedented magnitude and Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch has undergone numerous organizational changes in the last 10 years. More recently, as noted in the Advocate's report, the shelter system has been more directly affected by the Branch's consolidation plan which began in early 2002. This plan reduced the number of shelter beds as new alternate placements were created and changed the way shift configurations are structured. With the Advocate's review completed, more changes are coming. Given that these changes in the shelter system are occurring in a broader environment characterized by the AJI-CWI restructuring, it is not unexpected that relations between labour and management would become strained. This tense relationship is cited as a concern in the Advocate's report.

Over the last 18 months, Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch has made efforts to establish a cooperative working relationship with the union that represents shelter workers (local 2153 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees - CUPE). The former management board invited representatives from CUPE local 2153 to attend board meetings and to participate in a common table process with management and their colleagues from the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU). Recently, the government and CUPE local 2153 met to clarify provisions in the collective agreement and seek solutions to the union and workers' concerns while pursuing necessary changes to the shelter system.

It is hoped that these types of processes can continue to provide an opportunity for collaborative and productive discussions. Manitoba Family Services and Housing is committed to a fair and effective labour force adjustment strategy to assist workers who may be affected as the recommendations in the Advocate's report are implemented.

5. A COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY FAMILIES AND CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

The review by the Children's Advocate considered one component of the child and family services system. This system, with its focus on child protection, is one part of a broader government responsibility to provide programs and services to support at-risk families and to enhance the well-being of all children. Research has clearly demonstrated the most effective child welfare policy is one in which key government systems work in an integrated manner to provide a holistic approach to supporting families. It has also been well-established that poverty is a key driver of referrals to child welfare systems throughout North America. Over the last few years, the Government of Manitoba has been pursuing a multi-faceted approach to addressing some of the underlying causes of family difficulty and expanding programs to improve income and program supports for children living in vulnerable families.

One example of this broader approach is the decision by the Manitoba government to restore the National Child Benefit Supplement for Manitoba families with children receiving income assistance. This supplement was fully restored in January 2004. In addition, earnings exemptions have increased for families on income assistance so they can keep a greater portion of income from employment. The annual school supply

allowance has also been increased. All of these changes demonstrate a commitment to improving the financial resources available to Manitoba's poorest families.

Manitoba also continues to be a national leader in developing an integrated continuum of programs to support early childhood development. Healthy Child Manitoba is a long-term, cross-departmental strategy to promote healthy child and adolescent development. New and innovative services include: parent-child coalitions; prenatal and early childhood nutrition programs; healthy schools initiatives; a health adolescent development strategy; and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effect early intervention programs. These investments are critical to preventing family breakdown by providing early and effective support services to at-risk families.

Manitoba's Healthy Baby Program is another example of how government is providing preventative programs to support at-risk mothers. Through this program, women with lower incomes are provided with financial assistance to meet their nutritional needs during pregnancy. Community supports are also available to help pregnant women and new mothers learn more about nutrition, child development, and general health and wellness. This program, the first of its kind in Canada, has assisted over 4,000 expectant mothers.

In 2002, *Manitoba's Five-Year Plan for Child Care* was announced. Since 2000, funding for child care has been increased by over 40 per cent with much of this new funding intended to improve accessibility to quality day care for families living on lower incomes. The number of new funded, licensed spaces has increased by 3,500. These types of supports can greatly reduce the stress experienced by at-risk families.

Building the capacity of the larger community within which they live can also support at-risk families. *Neighbourhoods Alive!* is one program government has put in place to build community capacity. This is a long-term social and economic development strategy that encourages community-driven revitalization efforts in targeted neighbourhoods. Funds from the *Neighbourhoods Alive!* program can be used by local residents, businesses and community organizations to revitalize their neighbourhoods through physical improvements, employment and training initiatives and innovative approaches to recreation, safety and crime prevention. The well-being of children is enhanced whenever communities become stronger.

These are only some examples of how government has recognized its obligation to support at-risk families. In addition, Manitoba Family Services and Housing is working in partnership with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority on a new, integrated service delivery model. Families will be able access a variety of services in a common location with multi-disciplinary teams providing health and social services, as part of a holistic response to meet the needs of families. This will result in a much more user-friendly, accessible and effective way to serve families and prevent children from coming into care.

Department of Family Services and Housing

SHELTER REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Implementation Committee is to act on the planning and system development recommendations stated in the Shelter Review Report from the Office of the Children's Advocate. The Committee will submit a detailed implementation plan that addresses the future-oriented recommendations in the Children's Advocate's Report related to system governance, a mandate for emergency care, resource development and how best to oversee and manage the emergency and short-term care system in the longer term.

CHAIR

The Shelter Review Implementation Committee will be co-chaired by the Executive Director of the Child Protection Branch and a person external to government as selected by the Minister of Family Services and Housing. The co-chairs will preside over all meetings of the Implementation Committee and report jointly to the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Child and Family Services Division and the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Community Services Delivery Division within the Department of Family Services and Housing. In consultation with the other members, the co-chairs will select, supervise and direct any staff assigned to assist the Committee in completing its work.

MEMBERSHIP, STAFF AND CONSULTATION

The Implementation Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- The Chief Executive Officer or designate of the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority.
- The Chief Executive Officer or designate of the First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority.
- The Chief Executive Officer or designate of the Metis Child and Family Services Authority.
- The Chief Executive Officer or designate of the Child and Family Services General Authority.
- Two representatives from the Department of Family Services and Housing.

A coordinator will be assigned to work with the Implementation Committee on a full-time basis. The Committee will select one or more persons with expertise in residential care to provide advice to the Committee on its work.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Consistent with the statement of purpose, the Implementation Committee will complete the following planning and research activities:

- Undertake a province-wide assessment of residential care needs for children currently in the care of the Child and Family Services System.

- Through research and trend analysis, determine the residential care resources that will likely be required to meet the needs of children coming into care of the Child and Family Services System over the next five years.

- Recommend a continuum of care and classification system for children's residential care based on the assessment of current and future need.

Based on findings derived from the planning and research activities, the Committee will develop a detailed implementation strategy that will:

- recommend a vision statement to guide the future development of emergency and short-term care resources for children within the new Child and Family Services System;

- propose a comprehensive program model to clearly articulate the purpose, goals and services to be provided within the emergency and short-term care system;

- recommend a set of standards unique to emergency and short-term care that reflect current best practice knowledge and Aboriginal culture;

- propose a comprehensive strategy to ensure that all staff working in the shelter system have the qualifications, training and competence to deliver a high quality and culturally sensitive service to meet the needs of children in emergency care;

- determine whether it is advisable to establish a centralized office for coordinating the future development of resources across Manitoba;

- propose revisions to strengthen the operation of the Provincial Placement Desk;

- recommend how emergency and short-term care in particular and residential care in general should be governed within the new Child and Family Services System in Manitoba;

- recommend a strategy for effective and coordinated recruitment of foster parents that is done consistently across all four Child and Family Services Authorities; and

- identify the costs, human resources, administrative and structural changes required to implement the recommendations contained in the plan.

MEETINGS, MINUTES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee will meet as often as required but not less than once a month. The co-chairs shall ensure that minutes are taken at each meeting in a format acceptable to the members. The full Committee will approve minutes. A copy of the minutes will be provided to the Minister of Family Services and Housing. The Committee will provide a progress report after three months and submit the plan (as outlined above) within twelve months.

April 7, 2004